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## Panel May Keep Figure on Intelligence Budget Secret

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The Senate Intelligence Committee said Friday that it would reconsider its decision to publish the intelligence community's multi-billion-dollar budget after a last-minute appeal by President Ford.

The panel, nearing the end of its 15-month mandate, will meet Monday to hear CIA Director George Bush and vote on whether to reverse its earlier decision to publish the figure, a committee spokesman said.

The U.S. intelligence community reportedly spends between \$6 billion and \$8 billion a year.

The community is composed of the CIA, FBI, Defense Intelligence Agency, the code-breaking National Security Agency, intelligence units of the military services and intelligence groups within the Department of State, Department of the Treasury and the Energy Research and Development Administration.

Former CIA Director William E. Colby argued that it would be a mistake to publish the budget figure for two reasons:

—Disclosing a single figure would encourage existing feeling in Congress for more complete details as each year went by.

—Analysis of budget figures (either a single annual figure or a collection of figures if more eventually became available) would help adversaries decipher what intelligence activities the United States was emphasizing.

Bush, knowledgeable sources said, could be expected to repeat similar arguments when he appears before the Senate panel.

Congressmen who favor disclosure of the intelligence budget counter that the Russians already have an approximate idea of its size.

The Senate select committee voted 8 to 3 several weeks ago to disclose the figure in issuing its final report, now due to be released Monday.

If on reconsideration, the panel decides not to publish the figure a blank space will appear in the lengthy report. If it decides to publish the total, the figure will be inserted, a committee spokesman said.